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U.S. Department of Agriculture

PRIMER FOR TOWN FARMERS. Thursday, February 7, 1929

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

SPEAKING TIME: 9 Minutes.

ANNOUNCEMENT: This is the day and hour when we read from Uncle Sam's PRIMER FOR TOWN FARMERS. And we have a very interesting lesson for today. Flowers. Flowers for backyards--- flowers for frontyards--- flowers for beds--- flowers for borders. Of course, this time of year, we're featuring PLANS. And we've tried to time the talk with the annual coming of the Seed Catalogues. Anyhow, the talk was prepared by W.R.B., one of the United States Department of Agriculture's garden advisors, for the radio audience of Station_____.

---ooOoo---

Maybe some of you are going to think that I should be psychoanalyzed for talking about flower gardens this early in the season....

But the real flower garden fans among this audience won't. Half the fun of having a flower garden lays in beating your neighbors to the first flowers from your early planting. So better start planning right now. Furthermore--- there's a lot of pleasure in looking over the seed catalogs and making up seed lists. And then, if you begin now, there'll be plenty of time to write for information to your State Agricultural college or to the U. S . Department of Agriculture. They'll help you plan.

And anyhow--- the day I got this talk together, it was as warm as April. Balmy, that's what it was. Water was running in the streets. There weren't any robins or bluebirds about, but they didn't seem far away. So I said: "A flower talk! That's the ticket for today."

First, I want to mention a few of the more common annual flowering plants, such as zinnias, marigolds, nasturtiums, four-o'clocks, periwinkles, sweet alyssum, and petunias. Lots of petunias....

Petunias will grow on almost <u>any</u> garden soil where there's plenty of sunshine and enough water to keep 'em alive. Of course it's too early in most places to plant petunias now, but you can begin to lay your plans and then get the ground in shape whenever the weather will permit. Wait till it's reasonably warm and the soil in good condition before you sow the seed. Of course you can start petunias in the house, if you want to. And then transplant them when the weather warms up. Or you can sow the seed later right on the ground and rake them into the soil a trifle. Petunia seed is very small and the chances are you'll get the seed too thick in some places. So you may have to thin the plants out to stand 6 or 8 inches apart.

If you like color, you'll like petunias. Single mixed petunias will put color and life into your backyard and they'll bloom all Summer.

Petunias are just one of the annual flowering plants which can be started from seed and grown in an ordinary backyard without much trouble. Take the zinnia. There's a flower! It's perhaps the most satisfactory of all the annual plants which can be grown in the garden from seed. Some folks think the zinnia is rather coarse--- but it produces such a profusion of flowers and such a riot of colors, that it's well worth growing. Besides, zinnias will bloom nearly all Summer. So don't leave the zinnia out of your garden party this Spring.

Going right on with the annuals--- there's nothing more charming as a table centerpiece than nasturtiums, especially when they're arranged rather loosely, with a few of their own leaves mixed in. Most people plant nasturtium seed in the soil right where they want the plants to grow. Nasturtiums aren't much trouble and the dwarf kind is especially good for narrow borders along the walk. A good border plan is to plant nasturtiums in the back of a strip of ground, and sweet alyssum in front, along the walk. If tall narturtiums are grown on the fence, dwarf narturtiums may be planted in front of them and then sweet alyssum in front of the dwarfs.

Scarlet sage is another favorite among the old-fashioned annuals that can be grown from seed. It's usually best to start scarlet sage in a box in the house and then transplant them to the garden later. Those bright red flowers of scarlet sage are very striking when the plants are grown in front of some green background, such as tall nasturtiums. Or, if you have a hedge, scarlet sage looks fine in front of it. Like the zinnia, scarlet sage wants plenty of sunshine and an occasional watering. The plant doesn't have to be coddled, though.

I've mentioned only a few of the old-fashioned flowering plants that may be grown from seed and that are well suited to ordinary garden conditions. Practically all the plants mentioned produce good flowers for cutting and are adapted to growing under conditions that aren't specially favorable. Don't neglect to brighten up your home grounds--- especially the backyard--- with several of these cheerful flower friends this Spring and Summer.

Now, if you don't mind, I'd like to say a few words about roses. Roses--- the flower of love and courage. Also the flower of peace and innocence. I suppose roses hold a warmer place in the hearts of people than any other flower. Loved by rich and poor alike, roses will beautify the home of the humblest cottager or the proudest millionaire without discrimination.

Wild roses, you know, are found in great variety in practically all of the temperate regions of the earth. But man has so improved the wild forms that we now have roses for all situations and needs. Among the most valuable for our purposes are the hardy perpetual bloomers, of which there are great variety in form and color. Maybe it's not quite accurate to say that roses are HARDY. They WILL winter-kill, often quite badly, in climates where the temperature goes down to zero or below.

Naturally, you wouldn't plant roses NOW--- not in MOST climates, at any rate. But it's a good time to be thinking about varieties, soil requirements, culture, and so on.

The American Rose Society recommends a Favorite Dozen, which includes the RADIANCE, RED RADIANCE, OPHELIA, DUCHESS OF WELLINGTON, LOS ANGELES, COLUMBIA, MRS. AARON WARD, and others. Old-fashioned June roses are very pretty while they last, but it hardly pays to grow them in milder climates when you can get so many fine varieties that bloom almost continuously during the Summer. Much depends, however, on the attention you give the plants as to whether they bloom or not.

You have to have your soil right. Roses do best on a rich, deep soil and they need plenty of fertilizer for best results. If your soil is naturally quite shallow and of a gravelly nature--- the kind that roses don't like especially--- you can still raise roses, with a little extra work. Just dig a hole about 2 feet deep and about 2 feet across. Cart away the lower soil and replace it with a mixture of clay loam and compost. Put in a little bone meal, ground coarsely. Then replace the top soil, but mix a little compost with it. Round the soil up 3 or 4 inches over the hole to allow for settling. You can do this as soon as the soil's dry enough to work. It's a good plan to do this work at least a couple of weeks before you set the rose plants.

When you plant the roses, set them at the same depth they were in the nursery row or pots and about 30 inches apart. The main thing in setting a rose bush is to spread the roots out well and then pack the fine soil closely around them. Leave no chances for air spaces. Prune any damaged roots before you plant the roses. Roses grown in pots in the greenhouse should, of course, be set with the ball of earth around their roots.

Then, just as soon as the plants are set in the ground, get out the pruning shears. Prune them back one-half or more, so as to produce a new growth. Use a pair of sharp pruning shears that'll make clean, smooth cuts. Most of the experts give their roses a severe pruning just before growth starts in the Spring.

Now for a few tips on care. It's bad practice to keep everlastingly sprinkling rose plants. This helps diseases to develop. The water had best be applied at the roots and the soil should be given a good soaking, but not too often.

Roses need plenty of sun. They won't do well if planted in the shade. Any kind of shade is bad, and trees rob roses of plant food and moisture as well. Roses should be planted where they'll get full sunlight. You could plant 1 or 2 climbing roses: one on the pergola, and another beside the garage. For the garage, the Van Fleet is good. And an American Pillar rose would do for the pergola.

A government bulletin goes into the matter more fully. Ask for Farmers' Bulletin 750-F, called ROSES FOR THE HOME, number 750-F.

---ooOoo---

ANNOUNCEMENT: That concludes the PRIMER FOR TOWN FARMERS for today. W.R.B. will give other garden talks at intervals from now until the gardeh's in the ground. Watch for them. Meanwhile, send your request for a copy of Farmers' Bulletin 750-F, called ROSES FOR THE HOME, to Station_____.

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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PRIMER FOR TOWN FARMERS. Thursday, February 14, 1929.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Speaking Time: 11 minutes.

ANNOUNCEMENT: This is the day we read from Uncle Sam's PRIMER FOR TOWN FARMERS. And Uncle Sam has a feature of special interest to housewives today. Most housewives are interested in house plants and flower gardens. But unfortunately there are billions of insect pests that are also interested in house plants and flower gardens. So, what are we going to do about it? In this talk, a specialist in the United States Department of Agriculture is going to tell Station_____'s listeners what to do about it, using cases.

My friend, Mrs. X, is "Just crazy about flowers" .....

At least that's what her neighbors say. And, when they see her marvelous window boxes, her charming potted plants, and her beautiful flower garden, they wish they had a little of that particular way Mrs. X has with plants. They say that she could almost make door knobs burst into bloom.

Well, be that as it may, I happen to know that Mrs. X has her troubles. She confessed to me the other day that there are certain evil influences working in her window gardens and conservatory now. She said the same influences would be felt in the outdoor garden later.

"Please explain," I said.

"Insects," said she emphatically. "INSECTS. From the time I plant the seeds in the Spring until the first snow flies in late Fall, my garden is constantly threatened by insect pests. In fact, these pests aren't content with that. They come right indoors and infest my flower pots and the plants in my conservatory".

Mrs. X. holds that seeing is believing. She took me into her conservatory. "Take a look at those geraniums", she said, pointing accusingly to a row of the merry red and green plants growing in pots on a shelf. "They're going to die soon -- if I don't do something about them. The under sides of those leaves are alive".

I examined some of the leaves and found clusters of small, soft-bodied pale insects with pear-shaped bodies and six legs.

"What are they?" asked Mrs. X.

"Aphids -- plant lice", said I, "and they're hard on plants. But you can kill them by spraying the plants with a nicotine sulphate solution, or a soap solution or by dusting with nicotine dust".

Mrs. X pulled a box forward. "Please sit down", she said briskly, "and tell me more about these garden insects. You've studied them, haven't you?"

I modestly admitted that I had given the last 20 years to a study of insect pests.

"There are thousands of insect enemies of plants", I began, "and the gardener must vary his control methods according to the type of insects he wishes to exterminate. You can't use a nicotine sulphate spray for all sorts of insects, you know. If you'll remember that insects are provided with either chewing or sucking mouth parts, you'll have a good beginning in your offensive campaign against the pests."

Then I got my second wind and launched heartily into my subject --

"The chewing insects bite off and swallow portions of the plant tissue, the leaf, the stem, the flower. The sucking insects, on the other hand, pierce the plant tissue and draw out the vital juices. Control methods depend on the group to which the insects belong.

"An arsenical or stomach poison, such as lead arsenate calcium arsenate of Paris green, is effective against the chewing-type insects, such as the leaf-eating beetles, grasshoppers, caterpillars, and other worm-like forms. You see, Mrs. X", I went on, "These chewing insects take part of the plant into their stomachs and the poison sprayed onto the plant is taken into the insect's body and proves fatal. You must see that the plants are well covered with the spray, however.

"But you can't fight the sucking insects that way. These pests extract the vital plant juices. Insects of the sucking sort include aphids, thrips, plant bugs, scale insects, mealybugs, and sucking mites. They're provided with beaks or bristles which are inserted into the plant tissue. You'll have to fight the sucking insects with what we call contact poisons. Some of these poisons are: nicotine sulphate, lime sulphur, soap solution, oil emulsions. They kill by their burning action, by poisoning the insect through its breathing organs, or by suffocating it. The idea in fighting these sucking insects is to apply the poison to the insect. Of course, you can't do that without at the same time applying it to the plant. In order to kill the insects, it's necessary that the poison come in direct contact with the insect. This is accomplished by careful and forcible spraying from various angles in order that all insects on the under sides of the leaves and other protected parts of the plant are reached."

Mrs. X had a question. -- "I think I have seen most of the insect pests on my house and garden plants", she said, "but I can't identify them. I wish you'd mention a few of the commoner garden insects".

"Well", said I, "there are the various members of the caterpillar family --- the cabbage looper, the abutilon moth, the cabbage worm, the hornworm, the pipevine swallowtail, the corn earworm, the painted lady caterpillar, the yellow wooly-bear and the slug-like rose caterpillars. The stinging rose and saddle-back caterpillars and the puss caterpillar are poisonous. All of these caterpillars may be poisoned by spraying or dusting with lead arsenate.

"The bagworm is the caterpillar of a moth. The male has wings, but the female is wingless and never leaves the bag in which she lays her eggs. Cut off and burn the bags. In the summer Arsenical sprays are also of some value in fighting bagworms.

"Cutworms, which cut the plant off at the base, are among the worst enemies of the garden. These worms work mostly at night. For relief, sprinkle a poisoned mash composed of bran, Paris green, molasses and water, over the infested areas at night.

"The stalk borer has the bad habit of boring and tunneling through the stalks of fleshy and thick-stemmed plants, such as asters, dahlias, hollyhocks, goldenglow, and so on. Other species of important borers include the European corn borer, the iris, clematis, lilac, rhododendron, and dogwood borers. About the only way to fight these pests is to slit the stem at the point of attack and then take the insects out and destroy them. When the insects get into woody plants, you can kill them by running a piece of flexible wire into their burrows in the stem.

"Among the beetles, the rose chafer is probably the one which is known to all gardeners and flower growers. Rose chafers are yellowish-brown and have long legs. They appear in swarms during June when they do considerable damage. Collect and destroy as many of the beetles as possible. Spraying won't do much good.

"The light-greenish 12-spotted cucumber beetle feeds on a large number of flowering plants. Spray with lead arsenate to kill the beetles, or with Bordeaux mixture to repel them. Protect especially valuable plants with cheesecloth.

"Black aster bugs, also called blister beetles, often invade gardens suddenly and in great numbers. They ruin the plants in a short time. Asters, phlox, and gladioli are damaged especially. Dusting the plants with either sodium or calcium fluo-si-li-cate is recommended.

"Spraying the plants with Bordeaux mixture discourages the tiny, active, metallic-colored flea beetles which also do a lot of damage at times.

"A poisoned bran mash will poison grasshoppers when they appear in damaging numbers in the garden.

"These insects all belong to the "chewing group", said I pausing for breath.

"Help", said Mrs. X feebly. "So many insects would run me out of house and home".

"Oh, they won't all come at once", said I. "Now there's the sucking group. I've mentioned the aphids or plant lice. Thrips are very tiny, active insects and when they feed on the plant they cause it to turn brown in the blossom. Spray them with nicotine sulphate-soap solution and dispose of old or badly infested blooms, rubbish, or weeds.

"Scale insects are circular, oval, oyster-shaped, and even rectangular in shape. They range in color from white to blackish, but gray and brown are most common. They attack the plant in large numbers. Remove and burn all dead, dying, and badly infested plants and then spray with either lime sulphur, oil emulsion, or miscible oil sprays in the Fall or early Spring. Spray with nicotine sulphate-soap solution in the Summer.

"Mealybugs are soft, sucking insects and get their name from the white, waxy, or mealy secretion that coats their bodies. Spray with nicotine sulphate-soap solution.

"Plant bugs feed on a wide range of plants, killing them or blasting the buds. Gather and burn all weeds and trash that might harbor the insects. Collect the adult bugs early in the morning before they get lively by beating them into a pan containing water with a film of kerosene over it.

"Spider mites are among the most tiny, persistant, and common of garden insects. They feed by sucking juices from the leaves, causing the plant to pale and then turn brown. Spraying with nicotine sulphate-soap solution is recommended, but it's also helpful to wash the plants frequently with water sprayed on the plant with a force spray.

"Ants are also common and destructive garden pests. Plant lice often attract the ants to the plants. So do the souring sap from plant wounds and the sweet secretions of certain parts of plants, such as flower buds of peonies. It would take quite a while to go into the matter of controlling ants. First you have to find their nests. I'd advise you to send for a copy of Farmers' Bulletin Number 1495-F. It tells about garden insects in much more detail than I have today."

Mrs. X. thanked me kindly for what I had told her, asked me to visit her conservatory again some time, and said she would send for more information on garden insects. She said she wanted to be ready to fire the open guns of her annual insect war early this Spring.

--ooOoo--

ANNOUNCEMENT: You may direct your request for a free copy of Farmers' Bulletin 1495-F, called INSECT PESTS OF FLOWERS AND THE FLOWER GARDEN, to Station_____. Another PRIMER FOR TOWN FARMERS will be broadcast next Thursday.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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PRIMER FOR TOWN FARMERS Thursday, February 21, 1929.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Speaking Time: 10 minutes

ANNOUNCEMENT: Dahlias! Gladioli! Forget-me-nots! Sweet peas! And still other old favorites of the home flower garden! That's what W.R.B., Uncle Sam's garden advisor, is going to talk about today. His talk comes as this week's PRIMER FOR TOWN FARMERS, prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture for broadcast by Station_____.

---ooOoo---

A couple of weeks ago, we talked about roses--- petunias--- nasturtiums--- scarlet sage. Remember?

We said that it's still a bit early to PLANT in most parts of the country --- but not too early to PLAN....

A flower garden without roses, petunias, nasturtiums, and such old favorites, isn't all it should be. And today, we want to talk about some other flower-garden pets that'll make the neighbors pause when they pass your house.

Dahlias, for example. By the way, how are your dahlia roots keeping? Better go down there in the cellar and sprinkle a little water over 'em to keep 'em from drying out too much. Many people pack their dahlia roots in sand. And, about this time of year, they want a drink.

You don't need to be in any hurry to plant those dahlias, though. It's still much too early for most parts of the country. In fact, dahlias being a late summer flowering plant do best when planted late in May or during June in most localities.

And how about some gladioli along the fence this year? You can get to work on the beds soon now. Just as soon as the ground can be worked to good advantage, make your rows--- about 18 inches apart--- and then later set the gladioli bulbs 6 inches apart in the rows. Cover them about 4 inches deep. Gladioli need a reasonable amount of fertilizer and watering. For this reason, I plant mine where I can reach them with the hose. The garden hose. I like the gladiolus for cutting because you can cut the spikes of flowers just about the time the first or second flower of each spike opens. Then they'll keep on blooming in the house for some time--- if the water's changed every day.

But what about dahlias? somebody asks. Do you cut the roots into pieces or plant the whole root?

I divide the clumps of roots and plant each individual root with a piece of stem attached separately in the coldframe. Then, if it's a particularly desirable variety and I want to get as many plants as possible, I split the roots into 2 or more pieces before setting them in the ground. I leave a good stem on each piece, of course. If there's only 1 good strong stem on each root, I simply trim off the weak or small stems and then plant the whole root with the 1 strong stem attached. Where I have plenty of roots of a variety, I'm not so particular and just plant the entire root and trim off any weak stems later. Some of the more common dahlia varieties, I don't plant in the coldframe at all. I put the separate roots each having a bud or sprout in the open ground as I would potatoes.

On good soil, dahlias should be at least 3 feet apart. It's better still to plant 'em 4 feet apart. The main thing is to have a good strong stake, 4 or 5 feet in height, set by each plant.

Now for the queen flower, the chrysanthemum. When you think of chrysanthemums, you think of football games and a great colored "mum" pinned to a pretty girl's coat. The beauty of it is, there's a color for just about every college. And, if you don't go to football games, you can enjoy "mums" just the same....

The chrysanthemum is another of the Fall flowering plants. The hardy varieties can be kept in the open ground from year to year. But it's usually necessary to thin 'em out, or re-set the plants in the Spring. As a rule, outdoor chrysanthemums will bloom late in the Fall and there's probably no flower more attractive..

Speaking of old favorites, let's not forget the forget-me-not.... To me, there's no flower more charming than these shy little blue flowers. I have a small bed of forget-me-nots near our house, close to the water spigot. Quite a few people are making a success of growing forget-me-nots for cut flowers and the florists are enthusiastic about them. I know a lady who has her whole backyard planted to forget-me-nots. She must have a lot to remember. Anyhow, she sells all the flowers she can produce to 1 or 2 large florists.

Forget-me-nots need a rich soil. Spade plenty of compost into the soil before you plant them. They also want an abundance of moisture--- but don't keep 'em soaking wet. They like fairly good drainage and prefer not to have their feet wet. Forget-me-nots are easy to grow if the conditions are right. Simply set the plants 12 to 14 inches apart and then take good care of them. You'll be surprised how soon they'll cover the ground and burst into a profusion of flowers!

Pansies can be planted now in many parts of the country. They'll bloom in the late Spring. It's better, though, to sow pansy seed in September in a coldframe and then protect the plants by covering them with a little straw or with pine boughs during the winter. It's surprising how many pansy plants can be sold on the market in the early Spring--- especially if they're of good variety and have plenty of large, well-colored blossoms. There's nothing nicer than pansies for a border, particularly in the front of the house where

everybody can see their cheerful blossoms early in the Spring before most other flowers are in bloom.

Sweet peas deserve a whole talk to themselves. But I'll give you some pointers now.

I'm planning to plant my sweet peas at the first opportunity. You may think it's way too early, but it has been my experience that if you don't plant sweet peas quite early, the hot weather catches them before they have produced very many blossoms. The secret of success with sweet peas is not only to plant them early, but also to cover the seeds rather deeply.

In a good loam soil, plant the seeds 3 to 4 inches deep. This protects them from severe changes of temperature which occur near the surface of the ground. It also causes them to form plenty of roots before the plants actually appear above the ground. If you don't plant sweet peas fairly deep, they fail to make good roots. As a result, the plants are killed by the first hot weather.

Someone asks about fertilizer---

I use fertilizer for my sweet peas. My land is naturally well fertilized, but I mix plenty of bone meal with the soil where I plant my sweet peas. I don't know exactly how much of this bone meal I use. I'm just like the old darky cook who took a pinch of this and a pinch of that. I simply put on enough bone meal to make the ground rather white, scattering it over a strip about a foot wide where the row of sweet peas is to be planted. Then I take my spading fork and mix the bone meal with the soil to a depth of at least 8 inches. Then I frequently add some compost and mix it with the soil. The main point is to have the fertilizer well mixed with the soil. Plants can't take their food in lumps and chunks, you know. They must have it in a soluble form so they can drink it through their roots.

Now, a word or 2 about varieties. I plant <u>any</u> good strain of sweet peas. But I like the Spencer varieties. As a general rule, I just get a good mixture of Spencers. I'm not growing sweet peas for the market, so I like a variety of colors.

As for seed, you'll need <u>2 ounces</u> for a row 50 feet long. One ounce of seed for each 25 feet of row, that's the rule.

Your sweet peas will need support, of course, as soon as they reach a fair growth. I drive stakes along the row at intervals of about every 5 or 6 feet. These stakes are about 4½ feet long and I drive them 1 foot into the ground so they stand about 3½ feet above ground. Sometimes I stretch 3-foot-wide poultry netting along these stakes, but I especially like rather rough string. This, I string on both sides of the stakes. It is better than wire. I use ordinary twine of a fairly good grade, but not expensive. I place the strings about every 4 inches, stringing the first set near the ground. Occasionally, when the vines get heavy, an additional string will

have to be stretched on the outside of the vines and then fastened to the stakes. By the time the sweet peas are in bloom, the strings and stakes can scarcely be seen.

Don't fail to have some sweet peas in your flower garden this year if you like variety, color, odor, and friendliness in your flowers....

Just 1 more tip in passing. Right in a corner near the garage, I will plant a bed of old-fashioned hollyhocks. They're just about the showiest of flowers and one of the easiest to grow. Hollyhocks bloom only for a short time in the early Summer, but while they last they're hard to beat. In the Spring I plant a few cosmos or zinnias among the hollyhock plants. These will bloom after the hollyhocks have gone to seed and their stems have been cut off.

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ANNOUNCEMENT: That concludes the chat of W.R.B., one of the Department of Agriculture's garden advisors, for today. He'll talk on gardening to Station_____'s radio audience again next Thursday.

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PRIMER FOR TOWN FARMERS. Thursday, February 28, 1929.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Speaking Time: 10 minutes.

ANNOUNCEMENT: Are birds important? Should the bird population of the United States be protected and conserved? Specialists in the United States Department of Agriculture answer both questions in the affirmative. And, in today's PRIMER FOR TOWN FARMERS, Department specialists are going to tell Station_____'s radio audience why.

----ooOoo----

When I was a boy, 2 of my best pals were Skinny and Pooley....

Skinny's real name was James Percy Davis. Pooley labored under the cognomen of Aloysius David Jones....

But, as boys, we didn't care about such high-sounding names. James Percy became Skinny and Aloysius David became Pooley to everyone except their parents and the school teacher. Other grown-ups in town used to pat the boys on the head and call them, "My little man." And the boys would walk away, blushing, and vowing eternal vengeance.

Well, in those days, we were interested in BIRDS. They appealed to our hunting instincts more than to our sense of beauty and the eternal usefulness of things. Before we learned better manners, we used to shoot at robins and larks with "flippers". Of course we almost never hit anything. But it was fun to pretend that we were GREAT HUNTERS in the FORESTS. And we would climb trees and study the delicate blue-and-white eggs of robins and find the mottled eggs of mourning doves out in the fields. Skinny brought some of those eggs to school 1 day and showed them to the teacher. She told him never to "rob nests" again and to stay in after school 1 hour. That was a big lesson to Skinny....

Those days are gone for ever. James Percy ("Skinny") Davis is now a well-to-do farmer. Aloysius David ("Pooley") Jones is now the mayor of a small city and the folks call him "Mayor". Personally, I am a radio-writer interested in about everything that radio audiences like to hear about.

But we're all still interested in BIRDS. And this is why---

Let's talk about James Percy Davis, the farmer, first. We'll call him "Davis", being as we're grown-up now. After that, I'm going to tell you why Mayor Jones wouldn't shoot birds with flippers any more....

Davis tells me that he's doing everything he can to attract all kinds of birds to his farm. He likes to have 'em around--- not only because their bright colors, cheerful ways, and gay songs make the farm a pleasant place to

live--- but also because birds have a DEFINITE ECONOMIC VALUE TO A FARMER WHO WANTS TO MAKE GOOD IN HIS FARMING BUSINESS. Davis is right. Birds feed on practically all insect pests, the specialists in the U. S. Department of Agriculture say. Proof? Well, take this passage from Farmers' Bulletin 1239-F, called COMMUNITY BIRD REFUGES. It says: "The various groups of birds differ so much in their habits that they feed on practically all groups of insect pests; hardly an agricultural pest escapes their attacks. The alfalfa weevil has 45 different bird enemies--- the army worm, 43--- billbugs, 67--- cotton-boll weevil, 66--- brown-tail moth, 31--- chestnut weevil, 64--- chinch bug, 24--- clover-root borer, 85--- clover weevil, 25--- codling moth, 36--- gipsy moth, 46--- horseflies, 49--- leaf-hoppers, 120--- orchard tent-caterpillar, 43--- potato beetle, 25--- rice weevil, 21--- seventeen-year locust, 38--- twelve-spotted cucumber beetle, 28--- white grubs, 67--- and wireworms, 168.

"In feeding on insect pests," the bulletin goes on, "not only do birds take a great variety, but they often destroy very large numbers of insects. Often more than a hundred individuals are devoured at a meal, sometimes several thousand. With such appetites, it is not surprising that occasionally birds entirely destroy certain insects locally. A number of cases are known in which trees, garden crops, and even farm fields have been entirely freed of insect pests by birds. On a 200-acre farm in North Carolina it was found that birds were destroying a million green bugs, or wheat aphids, a day."

It seems to me that that makes a pretty good case for the birds.

You know, there are in the United States only about 2 birds to the acre, on the average. But where they are protected and encouraged, it has been shown that a very great increase over the normal bird population can be procured. No fewer than 59 pairs to the acre is the figure reached in the most successful of bird-conservation attempts reported. At an estimated value of 10 cents each, a figure ridiculously low, but used to insure a safe minimum estimate--- the birds of the United States PREVENT AN INCREASE IN THE ANNUAL DAMAGE DONE BY INSECTS OF MORE THAN 400 MILLION DOLLARS!

Now, if a farm doesn't have as many birds as it should, it just means that the owner of that farm isn't getting his FAIR SHARE of this 400-million-dollar benefit. It seems to me that that's worth thinking over.

My friend, Davis, has already thought it over. And now he has a regular bird-protection program. He encourages birds to make his farm their home by protecting them while they're there. He protects them from all bird enemies, so far as he can. He makes sure that there are plenty of nesting sites for the birds on his place. And, when food and water run short, Davis supplies them to the birds.

This may sound a bit sentimental to some hard-shelled people who think that there are plenty of birds in the United States and that they don't need any special encouragement. But a lot of farmers are cooperating with

their State game commissioners; with their State bird clubs, or with the schools, in forming bird refuges on their farms. In such cases, the owner of the farm agrees to the use of his land. He acts as warden. And the other party to the bird-refuge contract furnishes and places posters, bird-houses, feeding-stations, or even stocks the refuge with birds. This cooperative bird preserve has been tried in many States as a means of establishing colonies of game birds and insect-eating birds and has proved successful. Farmers are finding that it pays to protect their bird friends.

Davis believes in bird protection and conservation on his farm to the extent of supplying special equipment for the birds on his place. For example, he has placed large pottery drinking saucers in convenient places here and there. During hot weather, and when water is hard to get, he fills these vessels with water. That attracts birds. He has also built several simple little bird houses and placed them in good nesting places. As I said before, he throws out some bird-feed now and then when the supply runs short.

I haven't time to tell you all the details. But you can get them in the bulletins I'm going to mention. The Department of Agriculture at Washington, D.C., has on hand copies of Farmers' Bulletin 1239-F, called COMMUNITY BIRD REFUGES--- Farmers' Bulletin 912-F, HOW TO ATTRACT BIRDS IN THE EAST CENTRAL STATES--- Farmers' Bulletin 621-F, HOW TO ATTRACT BIRDS IN THE NORTHEASTERN STATES--- Farmers' Bulletin 760-F, HOW TO ATTRACT BIRDS IN THE NORTHWESTERN STATES--- and Farmers' Bulletin 844-F, HOW TO ATTRACT BIRDS IN THE MIDDLE ATLANTIC STATES. These publications tell how to build different kinds of bird houses--- how to establish bird refuges--- and how to attract birds to the farm. Send for the copies you are specially interested in and that apply to your particular locality.

Folks who live in town will be interested in Mayor Jones' arguments. They are different from Farmer Davis's, but just as good.

The mayor once told me that when he first began his administration, he was so busy keeping his political fences in good repair that he didn't pay as much attention to city beautification as he could have done. "Then," says Mayor Jones, "I visited a city where city-beautification has been made 1 of the main planks in the civic platform. That town was a mighty pleasant place to live in. The parks and the streets were clean, tree-shaded, and there were plenty of birds, which seemed to add a lot to the whole system. So I decided to do some work along that line in OUR town, during the remainder of my term, and then to PROMISE TO DO STILL MORE COMMUNITY BEAUTIFICATION WORK during a second term, were I to be re-elected."

Jones WAS re-elected. And he's keeping his promise.

Jones believes that his parks are improved by the presence of birds. He has made these parks bird refuges. He has installed bird baths, feeding

stations, and bird houses in quiet nooks in the parks where they'll really add to the attractiveness of the place. The birds like it. So do the children. And so do the grown-ups, if the number of men and women you can find feeding the birds of an early morning is any sign.

The State of Oregon has a law which provides that all incorporated towns and cities, and all public parks and school grounds in the State shall be, without additional local or general legislation, bird and game sanctuaries.

Jones tells me that he'd like such a law passed in his own State. Maybe, when he gets to be a State senator, he'll try to put one through.

My time is just about up and I won't have time to give all the details of what a town or city can do to attract and protect birds. But that Farmers' Bulletin 1239-F, called COMMUNITY BIRD REFUGES, does. Any one interested is invited to send for a copy.

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ANNOUNCEMENT: That concludes the PRIMER FOR TOWN FARMERS, from the U. S. Department of Agriculture, for today. Bird-lovers will find the publications mentioned, interesting. A request, directed to Station_____, will bring copies. The bulletins are: Farmers' Bulletin 1239-F, called COMMUNITY BIRD REFUGES--- and Farmers' Bulletins 912-F, 621-F, 760-F, and 844-F, dealing with attracting birds in the East Central, Northeastern, Northwestern and Middle Atlantic States, respectively.